
Company History

Bob Russ (#3296)

I have a personal curiosity about company histories and thought this might be interesting to others in the Club and it could help answer some outstanding questions about the users of perfins.

Cudahy Packing Company (C356)

In the February issue of the *Bulletin* there was a cover from the Cudahy Packing Company advertising Old Dutch Cleanser. In looking for information about the company I found the following.

The Cudahy brothers started working in the meat business in the early 1860s. The brothers operated small packing plants in Chicago in the 1870's and 1880's. In 1887, with backing from Phillip Armour, the family started an Armour-Cudahy packing plant in Omaha, Nebraska. Today we complain about cities and states giving money to companies to establish factories within their jurisdiction. I was unaware but not surprised that this has been going on for a long time. When the company started in

1887 they received a \$150,000 bonus for locating the company in Omaha.

The Cudahy Packing Co. (C-356) was created in 1890, when Michael bought Armour's interest. Over the next 30 years, the company added branches across the country. Branches that I could find listed were Los Angeles, CA; Albany, GA; Newport, MN; Kansas City, KN; Wichita, KN; Salt Lake City, UT; Jersey City, NJ; Memphis (Leewood), TN; and Detroit, MI. There were also additional offices located in Canada. At the company's peak there were 87 branches.

They built a cleaning products plant at East Chicago, Indiana, in 1909. Soap at this time was made from animal fats. A natural extension for a meat packing company would be to make soap. Products were marketed under the names Gibson's Soap Polish, Premier Oil Soap, Cudahy's Quick Sudz, and Pyramid Soap Powder.

However, the Old Dutch Cleanser was a pumicite product, using materials mined in California starting in 1923. Pumicite was also used in Bon Ami and Comet cleansers. The original mine located in the Mojave Desert closed in 1947 and the material was subsequently obtained from other sources. The product was packaged at plants in Toronto Canada; Calumet, IN; Los Angeles, CA; Omaha, NE; and Sydney, Australia.

The company also branched into other related products. In 1914 they purchased a cheese factory (The Dow Cheese Company) in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin and started producing Meadow Grove Cheese. In 1917 they purchased the Sunlight Produce Company of Winfield, Iowa. A separate produce house in Sioux City, Iowa produced Sunlight brand poultry and eggs. At an Evansville, Wisconsin plant they produced D. E. Wood Butter, and Sunlight Creameries from Washington Court House in Ohio. They also sold leather and wool (combed from the sheep hides).

Much of this information comes from a company history published by the company in 1925.

Additional interesting information includes a discussion of the telephone service they used between the Midwest and the East Coast. They hired special individuals to make 15 minute phone calls each day to relay information. The individuals were hired because of the speed at which they were able to speak.

In 1911 they moved their headquarters from Omaha to Chicago. After World War II they moved their headquarters back to Omaha. In 1965 the company headquarters was moved to Phoenix and the company name changed to Cudahy Company. In the

1970s the company was purchased by General Host. The food division of General Host was subsequently (in 1987) purchased by Kraft Foods.

And an Offer

Anyone wanting information regarding particular companies can contact me and I will try to find what information I can about those companies for future issues. My contact information is: Bob Russ, 48 Thompson Ave, Ft Mitchell, KY 41017 -- russr1@nku.edu
